

REMARKS

The non-final Office Action mailed April 23, 2007 and reference cited therein have been reviewed. Applicant has, by this amendment, amended the Specification, canceled claims 2-4, 11-13, amended claims 1, 5-8, 10 and 14-18, and added new claims 19-28. Applicant submits that the amendments to the Specification do not constitute new matter.

DRAWING OBJECTION

The Examiner indicated Figures 1-3 and 5 lacked proper crosshatching. Applicant has submitted replacement pages for Figures 1-3 and 5.

The Examiner also stated that the drawings do not show every feature of the claims invention, namely the locking ring and the fixing element designed as an integrated nut in claims 4 and 13. Claims 4 and 13 have been canceled by this amendment, thus making this objection moot.

The Examiner also requested that Figure 1 include a "prior art" designation. Applicant has submitted a replacement page for Figure 1 that includes such designation.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The Examiner objected to several of the claims. Applicant has either canceled the objected to claims or amended the claims as suggested by the Examiner.

THE SECTION 112 REJECTION

Claims 4 and 13 were rejected under 35 USC §112(2) for being indefinite. These two claims have been canceled by this Amendment, thereby making the rejection moot.

THE SECTION 102 AND 103 REJECTIONS

Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Manton. Claims 10-18 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Admitted Prior Art (APA)

in view of Manton.

As an initial matter, Manton is directed to a flange that connects two pipes together. Manton has nothing to do with a flange that connects a spring arrangement to a machine tool. As such, Manton is not analogous art to the claimed invention. Even if Manton is citable against the present invention, which it should not, the amended claims are patentable over the teachings of Manton.

Claim 1 was amended to include the limitation that the flanged connection includes a separate locking ring and fixing element. Claim 1 was also amended to require the fixing element to apply a contact force against the locking ring when the upper flange half and the lower flange half design are secured together. Manton does not disclose, teach or suggest such an arrangement.

Claim 10 was also amended to include similar limitations as in claim 1. As such, Manton in combination with the APA does not make obvious amended claim 10.

Applicant submits that all the pending claims are allowable over the cited art of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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